

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

Trooper Michael Hayen, North Dakota Highway Patrol NDHP Hiring Process

The North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) has a four-phase hiring process for individuals who are interested in becoming troopers. Phase one is the initial application, phase two is written tests, phase three is an oral interview and written personality test, and phase four is a background investigation. This intense process is to ensure individuals hired meet requirements and can demonstrate the core values of the NDHP:

- **Loyalty:** We will show allegiance to ourselves, our department, the state of North Dakota, our community, and to those who came before us and sacrificed so much to ensure the safety of our citizens.
- **Integrity:** We are honest, responsible, and ethical. Citizens place the highest trust in the NDHP. Each member must recognize that they are held to a higher standard of accountability than the public. We must always be mindful to NEVER violate the public trust. Our conduct, both on and off duty, must be beyond reproach.
- **Commitment:** To fulfill the vision of the NDHP, each employee must deliberately carry out their duties and responsibilities to the best of their abilities.
- **Respect:** Because we are a diverse culture, we value each other and all members of our community regardless of age, race, gender, appearance, individual beliefs or lifestyles. We will always show understanding, respect, and appreciation for our similarities and differences.
- **Professional:** As professionals, we must conform to the technical and ethical standards of our vocation. Because we are highly trained and dedicated, we are capable of handling the daily demands of law enforcement and devoting our full energy and talents to the department’s vision.
- **Accountability:** Employees at all levels and ranks must accept responsibility for their actions both in their personal life and in their professional life.

According to the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, the need for public trust, respect, and confidence in the police service, and the responsibilities entrusted to police officers, preclude the employment of the dishonest, immature, lazy, immoral and unreliable. A background investigation is the collection and evaluation of information concerning an applicant's prior life including their family history, education, employment, military service, former residences, any organization memberships and/or affiliations, personal and professional references, temperament (violence), alcohol and drug use, driving history, finances, criminal and civil litigation, emotional health, character, and integrity. An applicant’s background must not call into question their ability to fulfill the functions of a law enforcement officer.

The purpose of the background investigation is first to learn about a candidate's past behaviors under a variety of circumstances. According to Dr. Chuck Russo in *Demystifying the Background Investigation Process: What You Can Expect When Applying for a Law Enforcement Job*, "We still haven't found a way to accurately predict future behavior. All that can be done is to review past behavior and decision making to determine a likelihood of performance and action of future behavior."

Secondly, the investigation serves to verify the applicant's verbal and written statements to the law enforcement agency. The most common reason an applicant is rejected from the background investigation process is for being untruthful or failing to disclose unfavorable things about themselves. It is important for the applicant to understand that all people have made mistakes. No one is perfect. It is important for applicants to be open and honest about their past. Typically, those who fully disclose even the most embarrassing things will have an increased chance of passing the background investigation.

North Dakota Administrative Code (109-02-01-02) requires the [employing law enforcement] agency shall conduct a criminal history background investigation when the agency hires or appoints an individual to perform peace officer duties. The agency shall submit a complete set of the individual's fingerprints and all other information necessary to complete a state and nationwide criminal history record check with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. This law mandates the employing agency must only complete a state and federal criminal history check on an applicant and not a comprehensive review of their history and character. The NDHP always completes a detailed, complete background investigation on all applicants prior to a conditional offer of employment.

For further information regarding the North Dakota Highway Patrol hiring process visit <https://www.nd.gov/ndhp/careers/ndhp-trooper-hiring-process>

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high-quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of our website: www.nd.gov/ndhp, like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol or join us on Twitter @NDHighwayPatrol or Instagram, www.instagram.com/ndhighwaypatrol, where you can learn more about traffic safety, get tips, and read NDHP news. Download the NDHP mobile app to receive notifications, download a .pdf of items to include in your winter weather travel kit, report a crime tip, thank a trooper, ask a question, or make a suggestion for next month's *Under the Trooper's Hat* feature.

References

Russo, Dr. Chuck (2014, February 4) InPublicSafety.com; *Demystifying the Background Investigation Process: What you can expect when applying for a law enforcement job*. Retrieved from <https://inpublicsafety.com/2014/02/demystifying-the-background-investigation-process-what-you-can-expect-when-applying-for-a-law-enforcement-job/>

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